

TIM'S FRIEND.

By Annie M. Barton.

CHAPTER VI.

HOMELESS, FRIENDLESS, AND IN TROUBLE.

"Echo, sir, buy a paper, sir, second edition, full perticerlers of the hexecution!"

Tim's ragged little figure balanced itself on the step of a tramcar crowded with gentlemen going home from business one evening late in February, and while he dodged the guard, tried eagerly to dispose of his stock-in-trade.

But the gentlemen seemed either already supplied, or not inclined to buy, and the bundle of papers under the boy's arm was very little lighter when the tram moved away.

Nothing daunted, he tried another and another, and in the intervals ran after foot-passengers, urging them to "Buy a paper, sir! Special edition, sir!" Alas! without avail.

The crowd of business men grew less and less; the tramcars, an hour ago filled to overflowing, were now almost empty; the principal shops were closed, and Tim stood in the deserted street, looking ruefully at his stock-in-trade.

For the last three weeks things had been going very badly with poor Tim. He had earned next to nothing, and must have starved only for the food he got by begging.

Sunderland had become quite a familiar place to the boy. Aided partly by gossip, heard in the lodging-houses, and partly by his own experience, he had discovered the most profitable districts for begging, and haunted them as persistently as he dared.

His one great fear was being caught by the police. He knew that if taken before a magistrate, and convicted of the terrible crime of begging for bread, he would most probably be sent to a reformatory or to a training ship for a number of years, and, to this wild little street arab, such a prospect seemed worse than death.

Tim had not forgotten the wonderful Friend of whom he had heard at the mission school that wet Sunday afternoon. Indeed, anxious to gain some more practical and definite knowledge as to where he might find this Friend, he had presented himself at the door of the building the following week, much to the surprise of the small girl who had first introduced him.

"Wherever did you get to last Sunday?" she asked reproachfully. "Teacher was real vexed when she found you'd runned away; she wanted to talk to you."

"All right, young 'un. She can jaw as much as she likes to-day, I'm in no perticerler hurry."

But when Tim took his place in the class, he found that the pleasant-faced lady who had taught them the previous week was not there.

In her stead was a middle-aged man, with a pucker of care on his forehead, and a restless, worried expression in his eyes, as he surveyed the turbulent group he was expected to teach and control.

"Your teacher, Miss Meredith, is very ill, and I am afraid it will be many weeks before she will be able to come here again," he said nervously; "in the meantime, I will do my best to fill her place. Pray try and be as attentive as possible."

There was a murmur of dissatisfaction; but perhaps of all the class Tim was the most disappointed. The questions he had meant to put must now go unanswered, for the boy felt instinctively that the worried, nervous gentleman in charge would hardly understand what he meant.

That afternoon Tim did not even try to be good or quiet. He kept the class in a constant state of uproar and laughter by sly grimaces and cleverly executed tricks, and though he refused to share the hymn-book of his small neighbour, he made her very angry by mimicking, in a subdued tone, her rather peculiar way of singing.

How different was the lesson to-day from that of last Sunday! Miss Meredith understood the art of talking to children in simple, earnest language, every word of which was within their comprehension; this teacher did not.

He tried his very best, but used long words that made the lesson sound almost like a puzzle, and I am afraid not one of the boys or girls even tried to listen.

When school was dismissed, Tim shook the dust off his feet metaphorically.

"I shan't come here no more until she gets better," he observed to his small girl friend ere taking his departure. "The old bloke this afternoon knows no more about teachin' than a cat."

And so poor Tim returned, with all his doubts and difficulties unsolved, to his hard daily task of earning food sufficient to keep him from actual starvation.

As the days and weeks passed on things grew worse and worse. Several nights he had been unable to pay for a bed, and had slept under an archway leading to a bake-shop, which shelter, though bitterly cold, had the merit of being protected from rain or snow.

Under conditions such as these it is little wonder that Tim often felt ill and miserable. He was troubled by a hoarse, barking cough, and sometimes a sharp, keen pain in his side, that hurt when he drew a long breath. His pale, freckled face grew thinner and paler than ever, framed in its mop of thick, red hair, and his eyes did not now so often twinkle with fun and mischief.

Strange as it may seem, Tim, though sorely pressed by hunger and cold, had never spent the precious shilling given by little Johnnie. It still hung round his neck, hidden away from sight beneath his ragged jacket, and he had grown to regard it as a sort of charm, and not as an ordinary piece of money.

Upon this February evening, as Tim stood sorrowfully contemplating his unsold stock of newspapers, his heart was full of sorrow and despair.

What was he to do? Where was he to go? He had no money and no friends; he was terribly hungry, there seemed to be a raging wolf inside him craving for food, and he had no means of satisfying it, unless he obtained something by begging.

Where was that wonderful Friend, the Lord Jesus, who loved children, and above the bright blue sky had made a home for them in which they would always be happy and never hungry or cold? Why did that Friend not come to his help now, in Sunderland, poor Tim wondered; and then he said to himself: "It was all a lie, there couldn't be any such Friend as the one of whom Miss Meredith told him, or he would never let a poor boy be so cold and wretched and miserable."

Since that memorable Sunday afternoon Tim had carefully avoided taking what was not his own, and, remembering his teacher's words, "You must not tell lies or steal," had tried to speak the truth.

But now faith and hope alike had fled, and Tim was desperate.

Homeless and friendless, poor desolate child!

And yet, even in that dark hour, the Friend who never changes, whose love can never die, was watching over him with the most tender pity and compassion; and by this strange, mysterious way was leading him to a place of safety and rest.

Carrying the unsold papers beneath his arm, Tim prowled about the streets for some time, begging from the passers-by, while every moment his hunger grew keener and more intense.

No one responded to his appeal for charity, and at last he gave up asking, and stood looking wistfully at the cakes and pies displayed in the window of a confectioner's shop.

He had sold only five papers, so two-pence halfpenny represented all his capital. If he spent this in food he would have to sleep out of doors, a terrible prospect when he felt so cold and ill, and when his hard, troublesome cough hurt him as it did to-night. No, at any cost he must be under shelter.

While thus meditating he saw a lady and a little girl enter the shop, and, with his face pressed close to the glass, watched quite a pile of dainty cakes and confections being put into paper bags. Then, the lady having paid for her purchases, gave the little girl one parcel to carry, she herself taking the rest.

As they entered the street the child lingered a moment looking into the window close beside Tim.

Overpowered by a sudden temptation, he snatched the bag of cakes from the little one's loose hold, and ran swiftly away, unheeding her scream of anger and fright.

But Tim had not noticed a policeman standing near. He had been a silent spectator of the scene, and now, before the boy was aware of the danger, his flying footsteps were overtaken, and a strong hand grasped the collar of his ragged jacket.

Tim looked up in wild affright, his worst fears realized. Visions of prison, of a reformatory, of the training-ship flashed through his mind with lightning rapidity, and the terror of it lent him almost superhuman strength.

He managed to wrench himself free, and darted into the middle of the road, where a number of vehicles were passing. There was a hoarse shout of warning from the driver of a cab; but it came too late, or perhaps in poor Tim's fright and terror was not even heard.

The next moment the boy was dragged from beneath the horse's feet, and carried to the sidewalk, where he lay moaning with pain. The policeman bent over him, and Tim's terror and distress re-

vived. He tried to raise himself to run away, but a terrible pain in his right leg made him feel sick and faint. The street seemed to be turning round, the shops tumbling down, there was a rushing sound in his ears, and the people's voices sounded far away. Oh, what was the matter? Was he dying?

Then Tim knew no more, did not see the crowd of eager, curious, and compassionate faces around him, and would have been quite surprised at the tenderness with which the stern policeman, well versed in ambulance work, examined the injured limb.

"Poor little chap!" said the man, "his leg is broken. I'm afraid it'll prove a bad case, for he looks half-starved. We must get him to the Infirmary as quick as possible."

The bundle of newspapers was scattered far and wide, the cakes had vanished, no one knew where, the precious silver shilling had broken loose from its string and was lost, but Tim heeded none of these things.

He lay white and still and unconscious upon the ambulance stretcher and was carried through the cold, dark streets to the Infirmary Hospital, where gentle and skilful hands ministered to his needs, and cared for him as perhaps in all his life he had never been cared for before.

(To be continued.)

LESSON NOTES.

SECOND QUARTER.

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF JESUS.

LESSON III.—APRIL 15.

THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS RAISED.

Mark 5, 22-24, 35-43. Mem. verses, 39-42.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Be not afraid, only believe.—Mark 5, 36.

OUTLINE.

1. Human Sorrow and Doubt, v. 22-24, 35.
2. Divine Comfort and Cheer, v. 36, 37.
3. Artificial Fears and Spontaneous Laughter, v. 38-40.
4. Divine Power, v. 41-43.

Time.—Very late in the summer of A.D. 28.

Place.—Capernaum.

22. "Jairus"—An early Israelite warrior, Jair, had conquered and occupied the region which in ancient time was called Bashan (Num. 32, 41; Josh. 13, 30). After him this ruler of the synagogue had been named. Such rulers formed the local Sanhedrin, or tribunal; they convened the assembly and managed the schools connected with the synagogue. Jairus must have been one of the prominent Jews of the city. "Fell at his feet"—In reference, but divine worship is not necessarily meant. Sorrow and need make short work of prejudice.

23. "At the point of death"—Mark and Luke speak of her as dying when the father came; Matthew, as already dead; but such differences are not hard to adjust. He left her at the last gasp; he knew that she could scarcely be living now, and yet, having no certain notice of her death, he at one moment expressed himself in one way, at the next in another.—Trench.

24. "Thronged him"—"Pressed upon him." "Crowded upon him almost to suffocation, so that he could not walk without difficulty."—Clarke. Every sinner has a mortal disease on his soul. Jesus loves to answer prayer.

35. "While he yet spake"—To the infirm woman (verses 25-34). "Why troublest thou the Master any further?"—These people seem to have no other notion of our Lord than that of an eminent physician, who might be useful while there was life, but afterward could do nothing.—Clarke. The greater our trouble, the greater is our need of Jesus.

36. "Be not afraid"—"How complete is our Lord's self-consciousness that he holds in his hands the key of infinite power! Relatively to that power it was of no moment whether the child was dead or alive."—Morison. Death need not destroy your hope nor shake your belief. "Only believe"—Unbelief too often prevents the divine blessing.

37. "Peter, and James, and John"—"It is hardly to be questioned that this selection was determined by the personal peculiarities of these three, which made them more ready than the others to understand the real meaning of Christ's words and works, and to sympathize with him in his trials and griefs."—Andrews. "Peter, who loved him so much; John, whom he loved so much;

and James, who should first attest that death could as little as life separate from his love."—Trench

38. "Wept and wailed greatly"—After the Eastern custom. "Mark gives a graphic picture of the tumult and loud



cries and wailing. Even the poorest were expected to provide for a funeral two flute players and one wailing woman (Exod. 12, 5; Jer. 9, 17; Amos 5, 16; 2 Chron. 35, 25). These public mourners were called 'sappirans.'—Farrar

39. The damsel is not dead"—Spoken figuratively. "But sleepeth"—So to speak of death is common to all nations and languages. "The phrase 'when he slept' occurs hundreds of times in the Talmudists, expressive of the time of death."—Lightfoot. "Cemetery" means a sleeping place.

40. "They laughed," etc. The crowd without. It is but a step from unbelief to scorn. "The father and the mother"—"Prudence required that they should be present and be witnesses of the miracle."—Clarke.

41. "Took the damsel by the hand"—As seems to have been our Lord's habit. "Talitha cumi"—Mark gives the Syro-Chaldee words. Christ's call and touch bring dead souls to life. We, too, must get close to those we would spiritually help.

43. "Something should be given her to eat"—Necessary after her disease and fasting. "From miracle he hands her over to the usual means of life, honouring thereby the laws and course of nature."—Whedon. Where spiritual life has been bestowed it must be nourished by appropriate means.

HOME READINGS.

- M. The daughter of Jairus raised.—Mark 5, 22-24, 35-43.
- Ta. Timid faith.—Mark 5, 25-34.
- W. The widow's son.—Luke 7, 11-17.
- Th. Hindrance of unbelief.—Mark 6, 1-6.
- F. The resurrection and the life.—John 11, 19-27.
- S. The life-giving word.—John 11, 32-45.
- Su. Salvation by faith.—1 John 5, 9-15.

QUESTIONS FOR HOME STUDY

1. Human Sorrow and Doubt, v. 22-24, 35. Who came to Jesus after his voyage across the sea? How did this man act toward Jesus? How did Jesus receive his request? For what should we seek Christ, and how? What news about the sick child came to the father?
2. Divine Comfort and Cheer, v. 36, 37. How did Jesus encourage him? Who went with Jesus into the house? Why were they with him?
3. Artificial Fears and Spontaneous Laughter, v. 38-40. What did Jesus find, and what did he say? What did he do in the house?
4. Divine Power, v. 41-43. What did he say to the dead child? What did the words mean? What result followed his words?

PRACTICAL TEACHINGS.

- Where in this lesson do we learn—
1. To come humbly to Christ in prayer?
 2. To seek Christ with determination?
 3. To believe in Christ's power to save?

Failed to Remember—"What's the matter with Rashleigh?" "Absent-mindedness, that's all!" "Nonsense! the man's cut and bruised frightfully!"

"Yes." He tried to stop a runaway automobile by running in front of it and waving his coat at it.

The Rev. Dr. Norman Macleod, Moderator of the Church of Scotland, has a magnificent voice. An Englishman said to him one day "Doctor, how do you pronounce your name?"

The Doctor was somewhat taken aback, but answered with dignity and some force. "Think of a cloud, sir; a dark storm cloud."

"Thank you, Doctor, but you need not use the voice of thunder to carry out the illustration."